



# Press Release

## CNEWA Canada helps Hassekeh Christians in Syria

**Ottawa, March 4, 2015** -- On February 26, Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) Canada sent \$45,000 in emergency aid to Syria's Assyrian Church of the East to help 900 families that have left their homes, fleeing the Islamic State that has taken over Hassekeh, a predominantly Christian area north of Syria on the border of Iraq.

As soon as Michel Constantin, Regional Director of CNEWA Lebanon, learned that the area was besieged by the Islamic State, he immediately contacted Bishop Aprim Nathniel of Hassekeh's Assyrian Church of the East. "We are appalled by this new attack that has caused the exodus of hundreds of Christians, fleeing 18 of the 35 villages in this region. The aid we are sending to the Assyrian Church will be used to distribute boxes of food, worth \$40 each, providing for a family of five for about two weeks."

CNEWA is urging the general public to renew their aid to displaced persons and refugees, victims of the war raging in Syria. CNEWA's core mission is to help the Christian community increasingly threatened by extremist groups that have taken advantage of the political instability to prey on the most vulnerable. The Melkite Church of Syria has confirmed that at least 450,000 Christians have left Syria over the past two years and expects this figure to increase if the war continues.

Anyone wishing to support the Assyrian Christians can make a donation to **CNEWA Canada** by mailing a cheque (payable to "Emergency Syria") to CNEWA Canada, 1247 Kilborn Place, Ottawa, Ontario, K1H 6K9, visiting [www.cnewa.ca](http://www.cnewa.ca) or calling toll free 1-866 322-4441. An official receipt for tax purposes will be issued for donations of \$10 or more.

### **About CNEWA**

CNEWA, mandated by the Pope in 1926, is well established in the Middle East with offices in Amman, Beirut and Jerusalem. CNEWA currently manages emergency programs in Gaza, Iraq and Syria. The organization's efforts also extend to Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan. Elsewhere in the world, CNEWA maintains a presence in the northeast of Africa, India and Eastern Europe, primarily in the Ukraine.

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**Contact:** Carl Héту, National Director, Canada  
613-738-9666